

Lifting Children and Families Out of Poverty Task Force

Meeting Summary and Notes

March 14, 2018

Meeting Focus: Programs having longer-term impacts on poverty and deep child poverty.

Preliminary remarks from TF Chairs: Conway offered three overarching points to consider when moving toward recommendations:

- 1) Targeting for each of the programs and services. Recommendations need to set stage for ending deep poverty by 450,000 children and reduce poverty by 50%. Goals make sense on both moral and practical grounds.
- 2) Legislators have said that they don't simply want the TF to recommend that CalWorks and CalFresh funding needs to be increased. Want the TF to also think about comprehensive and integrated approaches to addressing poverty, such as Promise Neighborhoods and home visitation services, and also consider new technology available to facilitate access to services.
- 3) As the TF considers areas like early childhood education, they need to think about how to include everyone in the solution, including public, private, and faith-based organizations.

I. Culture, Context, and Community Engagement: A Foundation for Reducing Child Poverty – Cheryl Tawede Grills, Loyola Marymount University.

Presentation highlights:

- A community's history, culture, oppression, resiliency, and wisdom matter.
 - When designing programs and policies, we don't often look at the invisible things like values and attitudes – we only look at visible behaviors.
 - We need to understand how a particular policy is experienced by individuals, given their cultural experiences and attitudes.
- These factors are important to consider when designing, implementing, and evaluating policies. "Those most affected are least consulted."
- Implications for lifting children out of poverty.
 - Should engage and listen to communities affected by government policies.
 - It is important that laws, policies, and practices help, not harm, communities (avoid adding to stresses already facing individuals)

in many communities). “Even the best intended policies have unintended consequences.”

- Case study - The Community Centered Emergency Room Project (CCERP),
 - Dealt with non-medical use of prescription drugs.
 - Demonstrated how a community-based approach successfully uncovered issues and problem areas important to the community (smoke-shops).
 - Effectively guided policies and further study.

Task Force questions/comments:

- TF comments primarily reinforced value of community-driven approach. It was noted that that process takes time, but is an investment worth making.
- It was also suggested that racial equity and related issues be considered when identifying leading and lagging performance indicators.

II. Outreach, Assessment, and Access To Services – Sara T Mayer, Code for America (CFA)

Presentation highlights:

- Focus of organization is providing affordable technology to better implement existing government programs.
- Discussed Integrated Benefits Initiative – the development of a multi-benefits enrollment system.
- Focus is on streamlining the “front end” of the benefit application process by developing forms that can be easily filled in by applicants using mobile devices.
- Discussed GetCalFresh, which is an application process for CalFresh used in 33 counties in CA. The goal is to close the CalFresh participation gap.
 - Works on any mobile device; does not require an app download (which can use considerable data); application can be completed in 8 minutes; uploads handled via device’s camera; CFA also maintains a live-chat service and text reminders.
 - App customizes user view based on answers to preliminary questions regarding the applicant. Includes behavioral nudges to encourage people to complete all necessary steps. Includes live chat and support. Clients can upload verification documents with photos.
 - Across 33 counties that currently use this platform, people submit about 16,000 applications per month.
- Program payoffs: high percentage of applications are completed, GetCalFresh online applications make up 20 percent of all applications submitted.

Task Force questions/comments:

- TF member had questions on the focus of the interface – does it involve sharing both ways between government agencies and CFA? Sara indicated that no sharing is initially required from the government agency. Vender collects and sends data to the government, although as trust is established, sharing can occur to facilitate more efficient/effective application review.
- TF member commented that in some instances, portions of application must be conducted in person, and use of an integrated benefit application may require a change in current business process/application requirement.

III. The Poverty of Unauthorized Immigrant Children and Children in Mixed Status Families in California – Erin R. Hamilton, U.C. Davis Department of Sociology.

Presentation highlights:

- There are about 208,000 unauthorized immigrant children ages 0-15 (2.7% of CA population); 813,000 students in K-12 schools are children of an unauthorized immigrant.
- 49.1% of CA children are children of immigrants.
- 196,670 are active DACA recipients, the most in the U.S.
- CA has experienced more return and less entry of unauthorized immigrants since the great recession – not consistent with national trends.
- Children of unauthorized parents are twice as likely to be in poverty (33%) as native population.
 - Reasons: parents are paid less on a skills-adjusted basis (wage discrimination). Deportation splits families, hurting children's outcomes. Children receive less health care and face greater stress.
 - Undocumented immigrant children also face reduced access to health care and safety net programs, although some states (including CA) have used their own funds on a targeted basis to cover this group.
 - U.S. citizen children of unauthorized immigrants are eligible for benefits. However, benefits are under-utilized because of public charge provisions, affidavits of support, reporting rules etc.
- Unauthorized immigrant children are guaranteed access to K-12 education. Post secondary education access depends on the state (AB 540, CA Dream Act).
- Suggested actions: targeted outreach regarding eligibility; assure agencies will protect privacy and rights of unauthorized immigrants engaging on behalf of their children; support SB 54, which limits how

local law enforcement collaborates with ICE; expand Medi-Cal to unauthorized adults; expand EITC to adults paying taxes with an individual taxpayer identification number.

Task Force questions/comments:

- Question was asked whether immigrant status will be a question on the 2020 Census. Answer: No, and probably a good thing. It is more appropriately included as part of the annual American Community Survey (ACS).
- Comment was made regarding the positive benefits of a measure before the California Legislature that allows unauthorized immigrants to receive occupational/professional licenses in CA.

IV. Childcare and Development Programs in CA: Access and Funding Since the Great Recession – Kristin Schumacher, California Budget and Policy Center

Presentation highlights:

- Childcare is expensive – \$15,000 per year in a licensed childcare center, and \$9,400 for licensed home care for infants through 2-years olds. Childcare expenses account for a high share of family income for low-income households.
- Many poor families have to rely on family/friend/neighbor care, which may be of lower quality.
- State subsidies were cut sharply during the great-recession. Funding has partially rebounded but remains below pre-recession levels. There are fewer funded slots - six out of seven children eligible for subsidized care did not receive services from State programs in 2015.
- Covering unmet needs would require a large, multi-year investment.

Task Force questions/comments:

- Access and quality are both important. The gap in quality, especially for young children, is large between rich and poor families. Quality means low child-caregiver ratios and trained teachers. Curriculum and teacher coaching also play a role. Need to use benchmarks similar to LCFF.
- Should ECE be characterized more as an economic justice issue?
- Improved parental leave would help address early childcare (100% income replacement for 6 months).
- TF discussed ways to make ECE more affordable and more accessible. First-5 is looking at alternative sites to help address care for all kids in all settings (near work, for example).

- Question was raised as to why families who are eligible for care don't access/receive it.

V. Supporting Families Through Home Visiting: Evidence and Current Directions – Elizabeth Cavadel, Mathematica Policy Research

Presentation highlights:

- Home visiting (HV) programs provide support for infants and young children (and their families) through counseling, health and home assessments, and related services.
- Providers include nurses, social workers, paraprofessionals, parents, and community members. Typical visit lasts 1 hour weekly or monthly. Some visits are done via telephone.
- HV has multiple goals, including reduced abuse and neglect; more connection to community resources; more family self-sufficiency; improved school readiness and academic achievement; and less crime.
- HV is federally funded through the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program. 40 states have state programs.
- California participates in federal MIECHV program. Also, First 5 CA is a major state funder for HV programs in CA.
- Over the long term, benefits of HV programs have exceeded costs, especially for the most disadvantaged families.
- However, the program faces challenges, including lack of eligible family participation and lack of retention.
- Presentation touched on innovations taking place in the program. One was the Family Connects program, consisting of a hospital visit at birth, a visit 2-3 weeks later, follow-up at one month, and up to 2 additional visits depending on need. Program was designed as a first step. Program has demonstrated successes.

Comments by Task Force members involved in HV programs:

- Environmental assessment of home is important. Not in-depth (e.g., presence of asbestos), but focused on the basics, like heating, air conditioning, is sleeping space safe.
- Positive outcomes mentioned included management of asthma, adherence to medication regimens, prevention of health problems, and a reduction in kids going into foster care.
- Challenges and barriers noted with program:
 - Programs are fragmented. Many community-based programs are not funded. Need to make programs coordinated and outcomes measurable.
 - Key challenge: ensuring that the families follow-through with seeking out other recommended services.

- High cancellations by parents, which are often due to real world problems related to lack of set schedules and multiple kids with multiple obligations.
- Regulations also pose challenges (e.g., the need to have the parent of the child present even if grandparent is the primary caregiver.)
- It is important to understand cultural/racial differences in attitudes relating to the program.
 - Parents can feel judged. Can limit this by meeting outside of home (coffee shop or hospital). Can go into the home after relationship and trust is established. Can also gain trust by having neighbors as peer mentors make initial visits, followed up by nurses and others. The use of promotoras was suggested as a possible solution.
- It is important to establish a relationship before birth, and maintain relationship with follow-up calls and texts. It was suggested that doulas and labor/delivery nurses be trained to follow-up with mothers after birth since relationship and trust have already been established.

VI. Multi-Generational Approaches to Supporting Parents and Children – Christine Ross, Mathematica Policy Research

Presentation highlights:

- Program description - provision in a single setting of services focused on child and services focused on parents.
- Examples of services - early childhood education or expanded learning with adult education, job training, financial literacy, housing assistance, benefit access, and health care.
- Although having support from theory and research, evidence so far is limited and mixed.
- Multi-generational programs are complex to implement, involving intensive and high-quality services for adults and children and a lot of coordination.

Task Force questions/comments:

- None noted.

VII. Expanded Learning Programs – Michael Funk, Director, Expanded Learning Division, CA Department of Education

Presentation highlights:

- California started public funding for after-school programs in 1997. Levels increased over time until 2002, then stalled for several years due

to state budget shortfalls. Funding turned upward in 2006, when additional spending required by Proposition 49, (approved by voters in 2002) took effect. Presently, public funding for school-based afterschool funding in California is greater than in the other 49 states combined.

- Services are focused on lower-income students.
- Focus now is not only on access, but also quality. State has developed quality standards consisting of 5 indicators. The programs need to be activity based, collaborative, have meaning, expand horizons, and support mastery.”
- “Expanding horizons” addresses an important limitation facing kids in poverty. Children in middle- and high-income families are exposed to more opportunities and cultural experiences than in poor families. After-school programs can fill the void by taking poorer children to a museum or visiting a college campus for their first time.
- Purposes of program are to: (1) provide enriching experiences and expose kids to role models that “look like them”; and (2) provide love and support – let them know that someone cares about them.
- Afterschool programs can be used as a point of contact for other services.

Task Force questions/comments:

- TF members expressed positive comments about program, but voiced concern about rural community challenges.
- One task force member was interested in evidence of the relationship between participation in after-school programs and interaction with the criminal justice system.

VIII. Safety and Community: Promise Neighborhoods and Promise Zones – Michael McAfee, PolicyLink

Presentation highlights:

- The presentation focused on the key principles guiding the development of Promise Neighborhoods and Promise Zone programs. Talked about the transformative nature of the program.
- Uses a community-based, community-focused approach that supports children at every stage from birth to entrance into workforce.
- Program principles:
 - Programs should take into account the specific needs and priorities of the community by including input from community members and leaders.
 - Programs are data-driven. Leaders are held accountable for results and given flexibility to achieve them.
 - Programs should promote social equity.

- Support provided from government, community, non-profits, and parents.

Task Force questions/comments:

- Positive reactions to principles enumerated by Michael. Comments were made about the lack of common data, the need for more flexibility and the breaking down of silos when developing/evaluating programs.
- California's Promise Neighborhoods and Promise Zones are all federally funded. Would it be possible for California to use some state funding to break down barriers for agencies to work together? Michael said yes, in fact there are examples of local funding in Adelaide, Australia; Minnesota; and Toronto.
- When would it make sense to consider taking this model to scale in California?

IX. Employment and Workforce Training – Nick Loret de Mola, CA Workforce Association; James P. Mayer, California Forward

Presentation highlights:

Nick Loret de Mola:

- There is a large gap between the number of technical jobs requiring apprenticeships or other credentials, and the number of people in the workforce to fill those jobs. At-risk youth are left out in the cold due to financial or other life circumstances that prevent them from gaining the necessary credentials.
- New approach is to move to a *skills-based* job market place, where people who are adaptable and “teachable” can be brought on board and taught specific skills on the job.
- Businesses are already bringing job training in-house. Workforce training should be moving in the same direction.
- Equality of outcomes is also important. Wage gap between men and women with similar education levels, similar jobs continues to exist.
- Nick also raised the issue of needing common data systems (on the back end) to be able to measure outcomes across departments and agencies.

James Mayer:

- Discussed issues addressed by the California Economic Summit.
- Noted that despite spending \$8 million in federal and state workforce funds and \$2 billion on community colleges on job training, California needs 1 million more skilled workers.

- Clearly there is a challenge in aligning training with jobs that are in demand.
- Another challenge – developing a funding formula that prioritizes workers most in need.
- Need for performance incentives. Did job seekers complete the training program? Did they get a job? Reward accordingly.
- Need for more public/private partnerships – for example, Northrop Grumman’s apprenticeship program.
- Goal of the summit is to fill the gap through several strategies. These include accelerating employer engagement strategies to provide students with the skills they need; developing programs to reconnect workers displaced by shifts in the economy; creating new options for workers to access training resources; and expand workforce pipelines in high opportunity sectors such as green tech.

Task Force questions/comments:

- Comments generally affirmed points made in presentations.
 - For example, point was made that even old manufacturing industries are focusing on job candidates with STEM skills, rather than specific job skills, and Kaiser Permanente hires employs candidates with critical thinking skills and trains them.
 - Low-skilled individuals especially need services to achieve upward mobility. Given various siloed funding streams, partnerships are important.